

Docket No. 200209473-1

Remarks

This Amendment is responsive to the Office Action of February 14, 2006. Reexamination and reconsideration of claims 1-21 is respectfully requested.

Summary of The Office Action

Claims 1-4, 6-7, 9-18 and 20-21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,348,101 (Schonfeld et al.).

Claims 1, 2 and 4-8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,365,886 (Murakami et al.).

Claims 1, 3-4 and 16-19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,918,490 (Stemmle).

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The Claims Patentably Distinguish Over the ReferencesIndependent Claim 1

Claim 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Schonfeld, Murakami, and Stemmle.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite that the media feeder is positioned to not be part of the duplex media path. This is supported by, for example, Figure 1 of the present specification, which describes input mechanism 120 that inputs media into the return media path 125 but is not part of the return media path. Figure 2 of the present specification shows another example where media feeder 225 can input media into the return media path 230 but is not part of the path 230. Thus, no new matter has been added.

The references of record fail to teach or suggest such a feature. Schonfeld, Murakami, and Stemmle all teach paper feeders that are part of the duplex media path. For example, Schonfeld in Figure 1 teaches that feed station 70 is part of the duplex path formed by elements 102, 100, 70, and 74. Paper that is returned for duplex printing is returned through the feed station 70 and thus is part of the duplex path (Schonfeld, column 6, lines 41-44: "...the duplex roller assembly is reversed in direction propelling the paper along return plate 100 into the paper feeding station 70."). Thus, Schonfeld fails to teach or suggest claim 1.

Likewise, Murakami in Figure 3 shows paper tray 38 forms part of the duplex path. For duplex printing, paper is passed through elements 34, 39, 41, 37 and into tray 38. See Murakami, column 3, lines 1-3: "...the transferred image toward the roller pair 37 which in turn introduces it to the second auxiliary tray 38." Thus, Murakami fails to teach or suggest claim 1.

Stemmle in Figure 1 teaches that paper is returned during duplex printing through elements 96, 94, 90, and along tray 70. Thus, the tray 70 forms part of the duplex path. Therefore, Stemmle also fails to teach or suggest claim 1.

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For these reasons, claim 1 is not taught or suggested by the references and now patentably distinguishes over the references of record. Claim 1 is now believed to be in condition for allowance. Accordingly, dependent claims 2-9 also patentably distinguish over the references of record and are in condition for allowance.

Independent Claim 10

Claim 10 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Schonfeld, Murakami, and Stemmle. In view of the above explanations of the references, the references fail to teach or suggest a media input unit that inputs media into a return media path and is positioned where the return media path does not return the imaged media across the media input unit during duplex printing. In each of the references, the paper tray that allegedly feeds media into the return path (as used in the rejections) has the media returned across the paper tray during duplex printing (see citations above for examples).

For this reason claim 10 is not anticipated or made obvious. Claim 10 thus patentably distinguishes over the references of record and is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, dependent claims 11 – 15 also patentably distinguish over the references of record and are in condition for allowance.

Independent Claim 16

Based upon the explanations of the references made previously, none of the references teaches or suggests amended claim 16. Claim 16 is thus in condition for allowance. Accordingly, dependent claims 17 – 21 also patentably distinguish over the references of record and are in condition for allowance.

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Conclusion

For the reasons set forth above, claims 1-21 patentably and unobviously distinguish over the references of record and are now in condition for allowance. An early allowance of all claims is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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